

PRESS RELEASE

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CONYERS BLASTS GOP CLASS ACTION BILL AS "CLASS WARFARE"

Rep. John Conyers, Jr. issued the following statement criticizing the Republican class action bill passed today:

The bill passed by the Republicans today will harm every consumer and victim in America. Its no wonder its opposed by every major consumer group, every civil rights group, every environmental group, and every health care group, not to mention the federal courts (led by Chief Justice Rehnquist) and the state courts. And we shouldn't be surprised that its supported by every major business group, including the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce, and benefits the likes of Enron, Worldcom, Tyco, and Adelphia and executives such as Ken Lay and Jeff Skilling.

In addition to throwing nearly all state class actions into federal court, the bill includes huge special interest give aways, including the following:

Retroactivity – The Republican bill applies to pending cases, like Enron, Worldcom and Tyco. It would give these corporate wrongdoers years of additional delay for cases that have already been filed.

Preemption of State Attorney General and Mass Tort Cases – The Republican bill is not limited to class action cases. Their bill would prevent state district attorneys and others from being able to combat fraud and abuse in their own state courts and force groups of harmed tort victims out of their state courts as well. The Majority has sought to make their bill seem moderate by including what they claim to be the "Feinstein" language from the Senate bill. The problem is, Senator Feinstein has stated on record that she would not support any bill that treats private attorney general actions as class actions, but that is exactly what the Majority's bill does.

Additional Procedural Delays – The Republican bill contains compulsory appeal requirements that stays discovery and may ultimately delay justice. It removes discretion from the courts of appeal, and grants it to the defense attorneys.

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